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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 003205

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: DEMARCHE ON REPLACEMENT FOR UNRWA COMMISSIONER

GENERAL: EU RESPONSE

REF: STATE 159245

Classified By: Political Officer Maren Smith for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) On July 27, PRM Assistant delivered reftel points to Desk Officer for UNRWA Christian Berger in the Commission's External Relations Directorate-General. Berger candidly remarked that despite a fair performance as UNRWA COMGEN, Peter Hansen's welcome has waned. Berger cautioned that rumors of Hansen seeking a fourth term continue to circulate and could place pressure on donors to push hard for an alternative. He warned that should the rumors bear fruit, the EU would likely shy away from actively seeking a replacement. He added, however, that if the U.S. wished to push for an alternative despite Hansen's desire for reinstatement, the EU would follow suit. Unfortunately, the EU has yet to discuss possible replacements very seriously, and Berger stressed that the EU would welcome any serious USG suggestions at this point.

2. (C) Poloff also discussed reftel points with Morten Knudsen of the Council Secretariat's UN unit on July 27. Knudsen had no comment on either Hansen or specific successors. He told us that the EU reviews upcoming UN appointments during its regular UN working group meetings; although EU members agree on a common approach in some cases, decisions are frequently left to member-states. He said that the EU would probably discuss UNRWA candidates at the next working group meeting, which will be held in New York in September.

SAMMIS